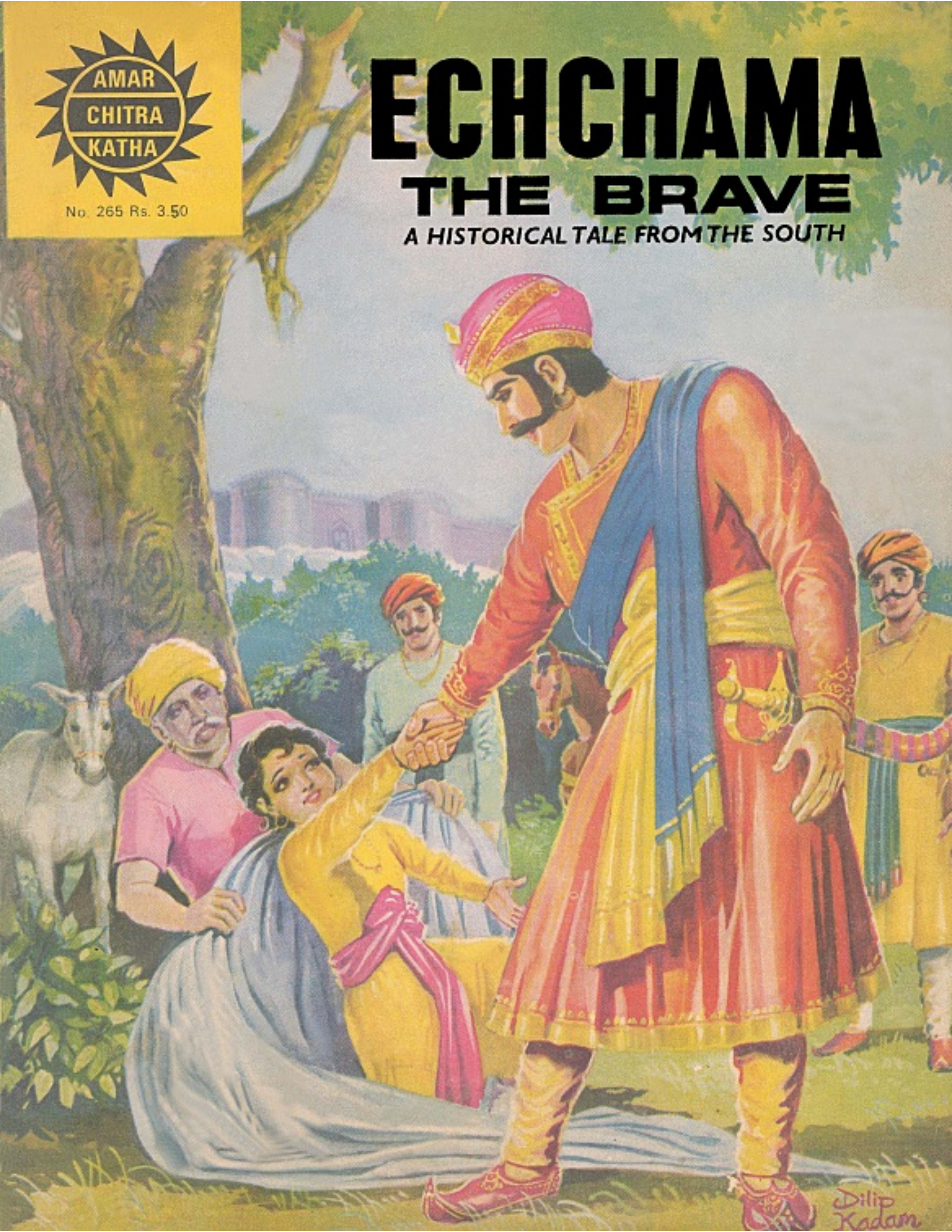




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Dilip
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An attempt was made to revive the Kingdom and recapture its lost glory by the Aravidu dynasty which ruled from Chandragiri, near Tirupati. Venkatapati was the ablest of the rulers belonging to this dynasty. After him there was a struggle for the throne. In the events that followed, Echchama Nayak came off with flying colours.

Literary works like *Ramarajiyamu*, *Bahulashva Charitamu*, *Raghunathabhyudaya* and *Sahitya Ratnakara* bestow lavish praise on Echchama for his bravery and fearlessness and his loyalty to his master. Echchama is also known by the names, Pedda Yachama and Yachama Shuradu. His capital was Madhurantakam, near Chingleput in Tamil Nadu. In Karnataka Echchama's name has become a byword for loyalty.

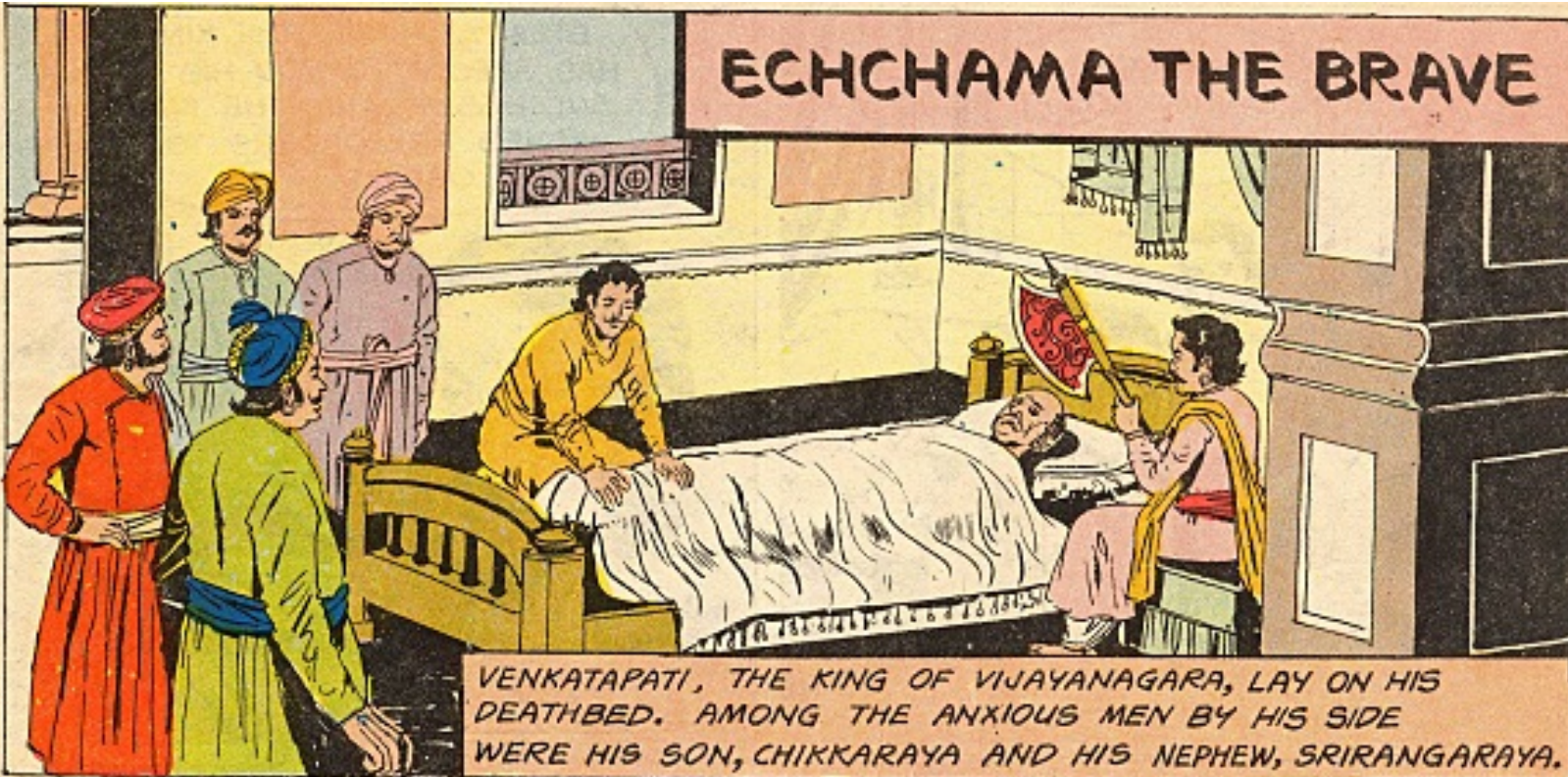
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ECHCHAMA THE BRAVE



VENKATAPATI, THE KING OF VIJAYANAGARA, LAY ON HIS DEATHBED. AMONG THE ANXIOUS MEN BY HIS SIDE WERE HIS SON, CHIKKARAYA AND HIS NEPHEW, SRIRANGARAYA.

SUDDENLY, THE KING BECKONED TO SRIRANGARAYA TO COME CLOSER.



NO! NO!
I CANNOT ACCEPT
THE THRONE!



STEADY, PRINCE. THE KING
HAS APPOINTED YOU HIS
SUCCESSOR. AND THE KING'S
WISHES ARE ORDERS TO BE
OBEYED.



AT A SIGNAL FROM THE KING, THE
MINISTER PUT THE ROYAL CROWN
ON SRIRANGA'S HEAD.



ONE BY ONE, THE NOBLES AND THE CHIEFTAINS WALKED UP TO THE NEW KING AND
PLEGDED THEIR LOYALTY TO HIM. PROMINENT AMONG THEM WAS ECHCHAMA NAYAK,
THE POWERFUL CHIEFTAIN OF MADHURANTAKAM.



THE ONLY NOBLE WHO HELD BACK WAS JAGGARAYA, THE BROTHER-IN-LAW OF THE DYING KING.



THE THRONE
BELONGS TO YOU,
CHIKKA!



AND I'LL SEE
TO IT THAT YOU
OCCUPY IT.

LATER, WHEN THE CHIEFTAINS WERE ALONE —




EVERYONE IS
SURPRISED BY
THE KING'S
CHOICE!

AND WELL
MIGHT THEY
BE!




WHY DID HE
DENY HIS OWN
SON THE THRONE?

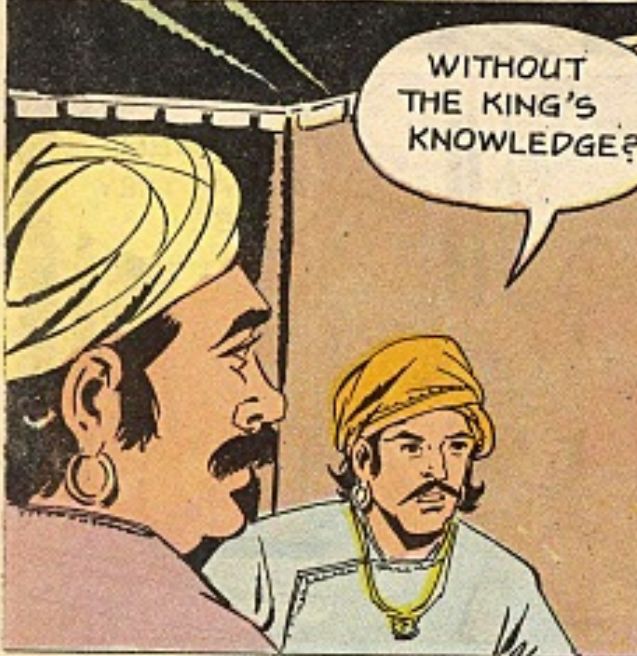
WHAT MAKES
YOU SO SURE
THAT CHIKKA
IS HIS SON?




FOR YEARS, I'VE
HEARD IT SAID THAT
CHIKKA IS AN
ADOPTED CHILD...




...ADOPTED BY
THE QUEEN, THAT
IS. THEY SAY IT
WAS DONE WHEN
HE WAS AN
INFANT.



WITHOUT
THE KING'S
KNOWLEDGE?

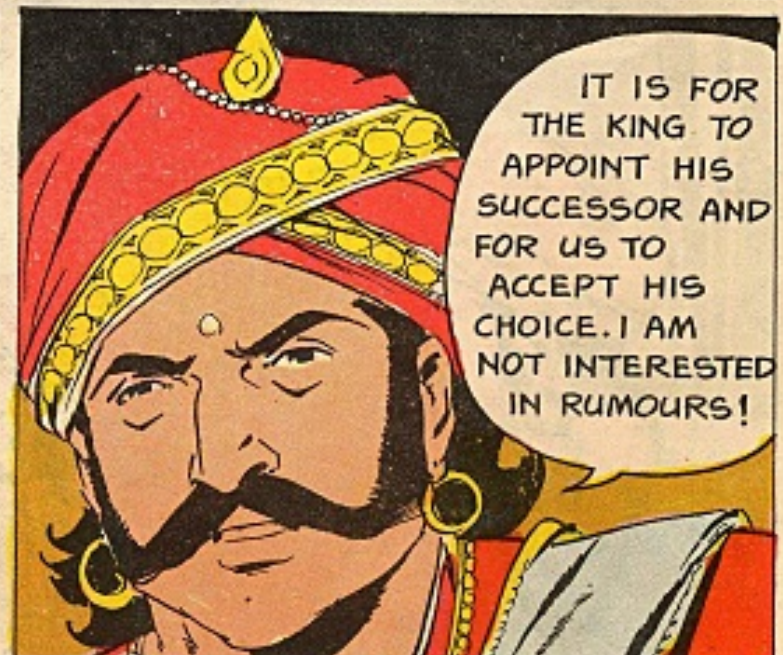


APPARENTLY
THE KING DID
KNOW OR WHY
ELSE...



YOU ARE SILENT,
ECHCHAMA.

WHAT CAN
I SAY?



IT IS FOR
THE KING TO
APPOINT HIS
SUCCESSOR AND
FOR US TO
ACCEPT HIS
CHOICE. I AM
NOT INTERESTED
IN RUMOURS!

SOON, THE OLD KING DIED AND SRIRANGA RELUCTANTLY BEGAN HIS REIGN.

JAGGARAYA HAS NOT PLEDGED HIS LOYALTY TO YOU.

AND NOW HE'S INCITING THE OTHER CHIEFTAINS TO REVOLT. TWO OF THEM HAVE ALREADY JOINED HIM.

YOU MUST PUT DOWN THE REVOLT BEFORE IT GROWS, MAHARAJ!

SOME DAYS LATER, HE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM JAGGARAYA.

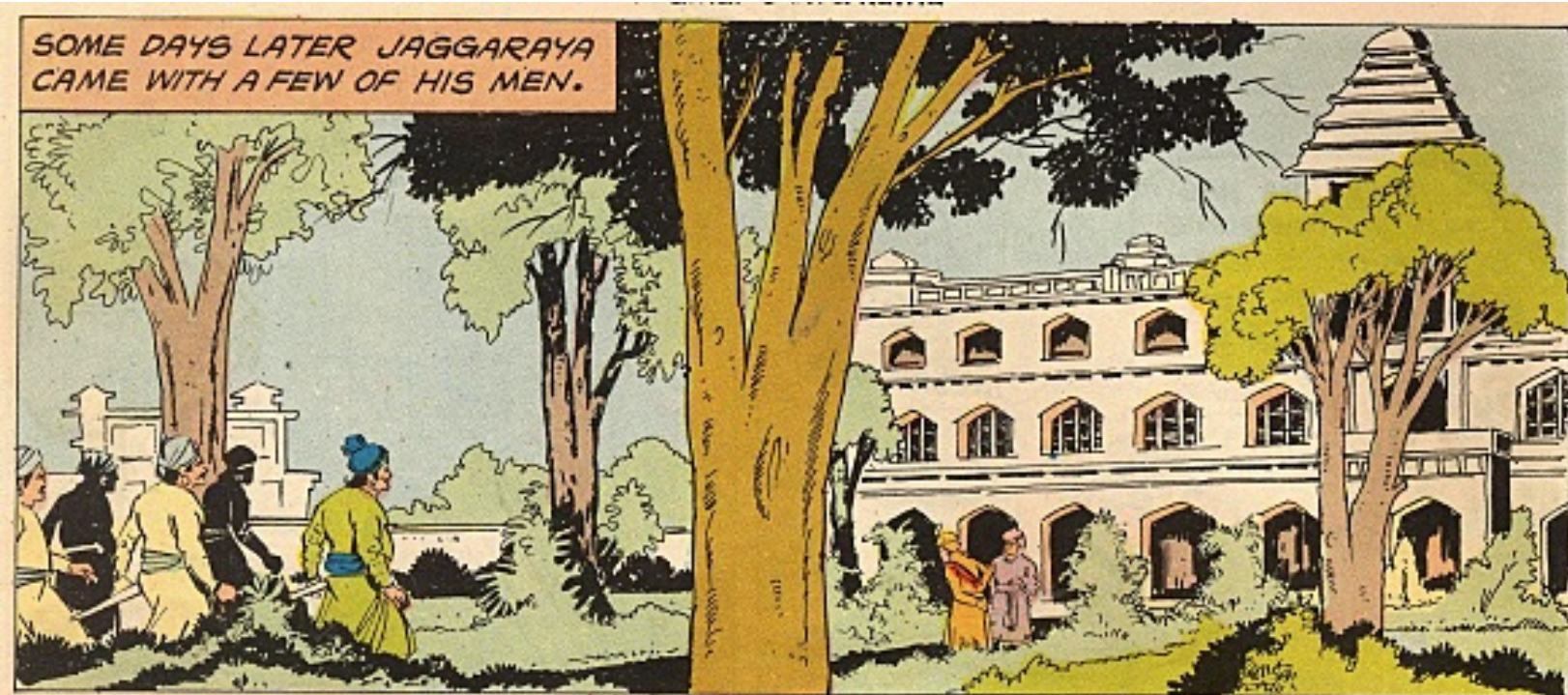
HE CRAVES YOUR PARDON AND BEGS YOU TO ALLOW HIM AND HIS FRIENDS TO COME AND PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO YOU.

SRIRANGA CONFISCATED JAGGARAYA'S LANDS AND THOSE OF THE OTHER TWO CHIEFTAINS.

WE HAVE FRIGHTENED HIM, IT APPEARS!

TELL HIM HE IS ALWAYS WELCOME HERE IF HE COMES AS A FRIEND.

SOME DAYS LATER JAGGARAYA
CAME WITH A FEW OF HIS MEN.



ALL OF THEM DREW THEIR SWORDS AND
KNELT BEFORE THE KING IN THE
TRADITIONAL SHOW OF RESPECT.



THEN —

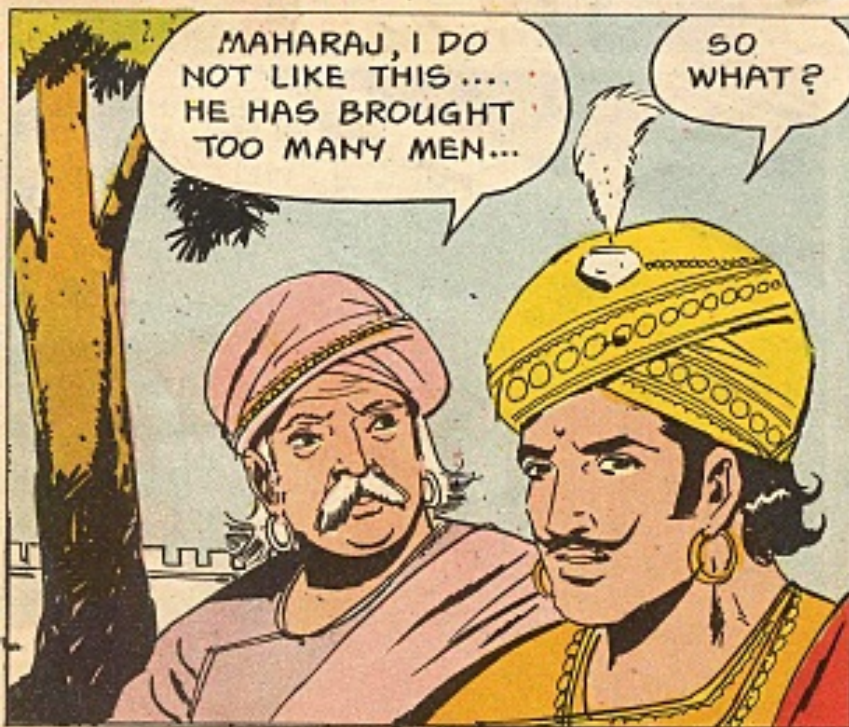
MORE OF MY MEN
ARE WAITING OUT-
SIDE. THEY TOO
WOULD LIKE TO
PLEDGE THEIR
ALLEGIANCE
TO YOU!

LET THEM
COME IN.



MAHARAJ, I DO
NOT LIKE THIS ...
HE HAS BROUGHT
TOO MANY MEN...

SO
WHAT?



PLEASE TAKE MY
ADVICE AND GET INTO
THE PALACE!

I... OH,
ALL
RIGHT.



SRIRANGA TRIED TO GO BACK INTO THE PALACE.

BUT—

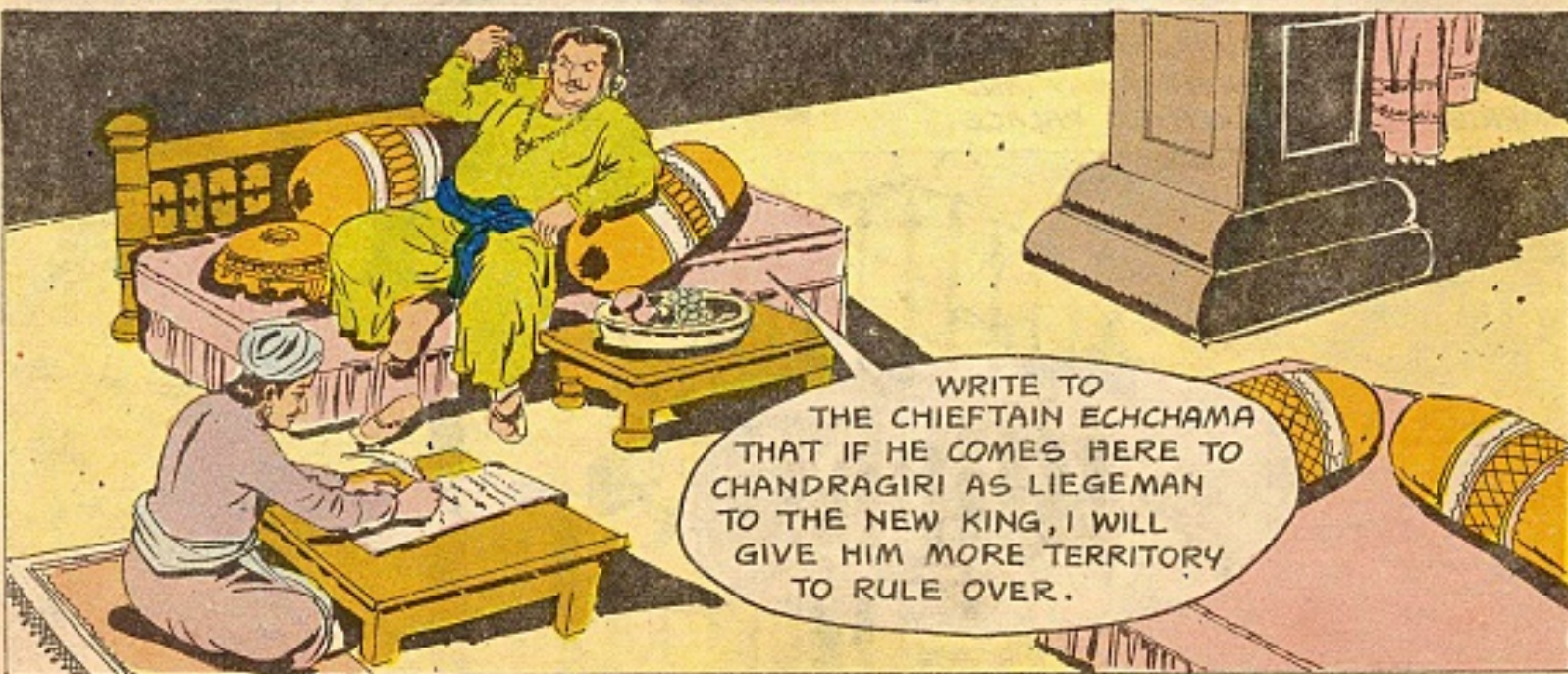
STAY WHERE
YOU ARE IF YOU
VALUE YOUR
LIFE.

SRIRANGA WAS COMPLETELY SURROUNDED.

ALONG WITH HIS WIFE AND HIS THREE
SONS HE WAS TAKEN AWAY AND
IMPRISONED IN ANOTHER PALACE.

JAGGARAYA CROWNED HIS NEPHEW KING BUT
REMAINED THE POWER BEHIND THE THRONE.

ALL THE
CHIEFTAINS HAVE
ACCEPTED THE
NEW KING...



THE LETTER WAS SENT BUT ECHCHAMA
DID NOT RESPOND.

I CAN'T
UNDERSTAND
WHY HE IS
SO STUBBORN!

IT IS TRUE
THAT HE TOOK
AN OATH OF
ALLEGIANCE TO
SRIRANGA. BUT
SO DID WE
ALL!

I ONLY HOPE
HE DOES NOT
ATTACK US.

HE WON'T.

HE WILL
NOT RISK
IT AS LONG
AS WE HOLD
SRIRANGA.

THE BEST THING
TO DO IS TO IGNORE
HIM FOR THE TIME
BEING.

MEANWHILE AT MADHURANTAKAM, ECHCHAMA AND HIS TRUSTED LIEUTENANT, OBALA NAYAK WERE PLANNING THE NEXT MOVE.

I WISH I HAD BEEN IN CHANDRAGIRI WHEN THAT TREACHEROUS JAGGA ABDUCTED THE KING.



MY YOUNG MASTER IS SO GUILLESS. I'LL WAGER HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS HAPPENING TILL THE LAST MOMENT.



JAGGA WILL PAY DEARLY FOR HIS TREACHERY.

OUR MEN ARE READY FOR BATTLE.



A WORD FROM YOU AND...



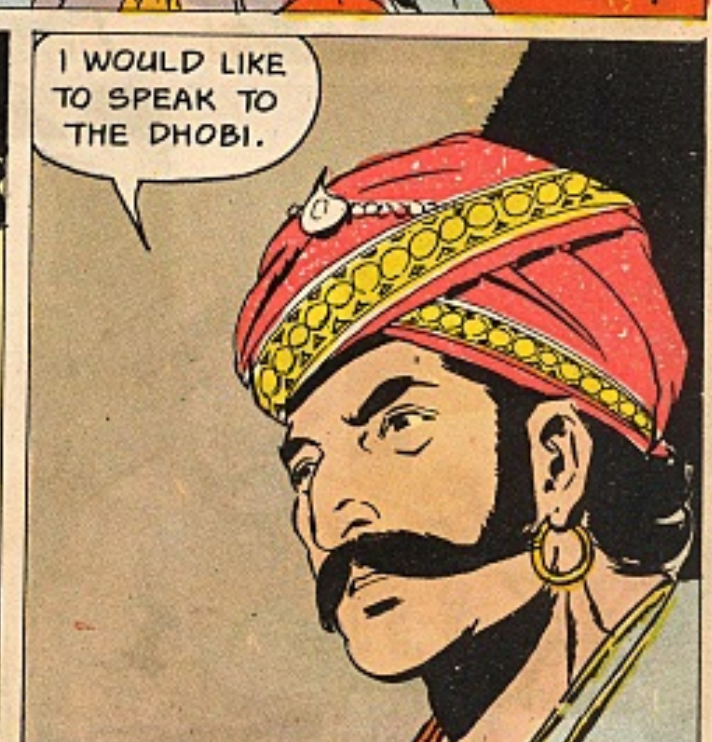
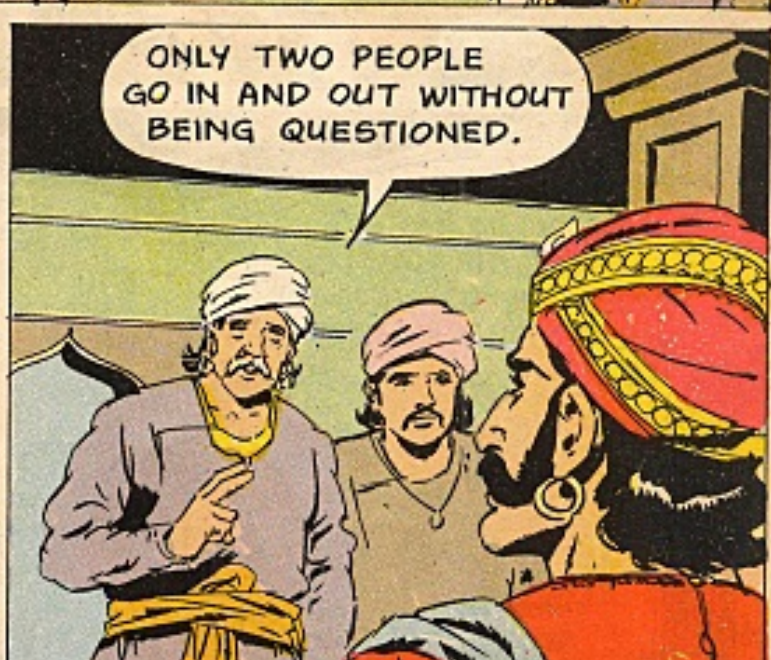
WE MUST HAVE PATIENCE. OUR KING'S LIFE WILL BE IN DANGER IF WE DECLARE WAR ON JAGGA.



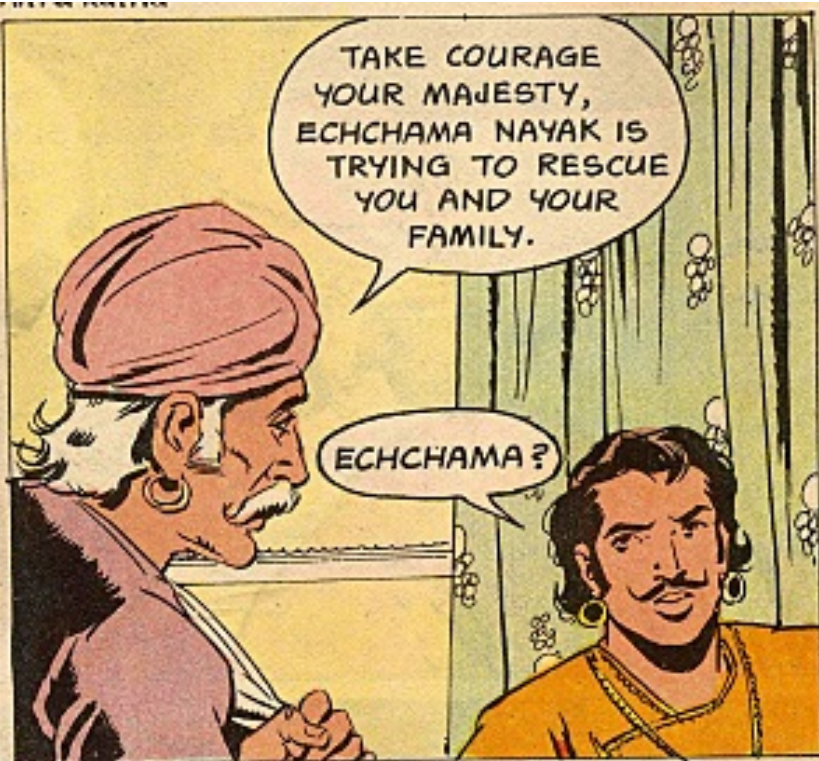
FIRST WE MUST RESCUE THE KING AND THEN PUNISH THE TRAITORS.

HOW DO WE DO THAT?





SOME DAYS LATER AT THE PALACE
WHERE SRIRANGA WAS HELD PRISONER—



THE ELDEST
IS TOO BIG FOR
ME TO CARRY...

... BUT
I CAN TAKE
THE SECOND
ONE.

A LITTLE LATER —

YOU HAVE
A HEAVY
LOAD TODAY.

ER...
YES.

THE WAY HE IS
TOTTERING ONE
WOULD THINK HE
WAS CARRYING
ROCKS.

POOR FELLOW!
HE IS GETTING
TOO OLD FOR
THE JOB.

HERE, LET ME
HELP YOU.

SOME TIME AFTER THE DHOBI HAD LEFT THE FORT —



ONE OF THE PRINCES IS MISSING!

HE IS NOT IN THE PALACE!

THE DHOBI! HE MUST HAVE BEEN CARRYING THE PRINCE!

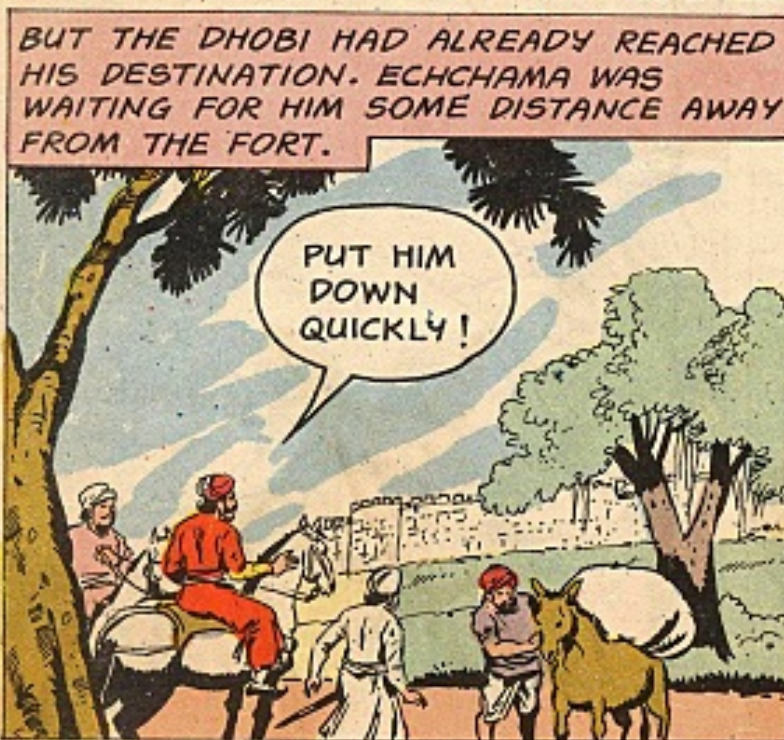


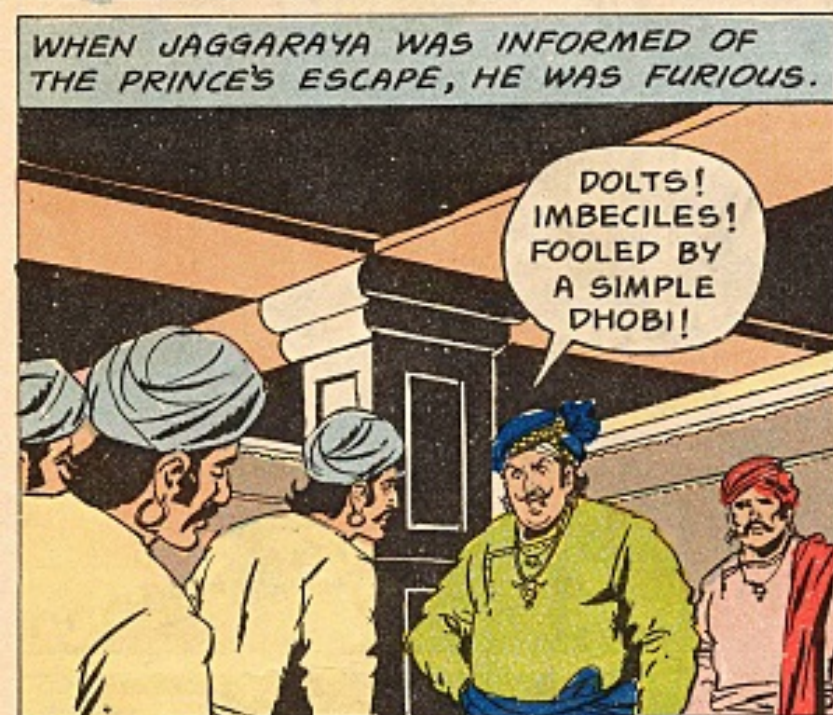
AFTER HIM!



BUT THE DHOBI HAD ALREADY REACHED HIS DESTINATION. ECHCHAMA WAS WAITING FOR HIM SOME DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE FORT.

PUT HIM DOWN QUICKLY!





ECHCHAMA
COULD USE THE
PRINCE TO RALLY
THE PEOPLE
AROUND HIM.

I'VE
TOLD YOU
EARLIER...
HE WON'T.

HE WON'T
DO ANYTHING
TO PROVOKE US
AS LONG AS WE
HAVE SRIRANGA!

HE MIGHT
TRY TO RESCUE
SRIRANGA.

LET HIM
TRY. I'LL BE
WAITING
FOR HIM!

JAGGARAYA DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF MEN
GUARDING THE PALACE PRISON.

THE INFORMATION WAS SOON CARRIED
TO ECHCHAMA BY HIS SPIES.

NOT EVEN
A CAT CAN
GET PAST THOSE
SOLDIERS NOW.

PERHAPS
A CAT
COULDN'T...



A SCORE OF MEN BEGAN TO DIG SOME DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE PALACE...



... AND SLOWLY BUT STEADILY BEGAN TO BURROW THEIR WAY UNDER THE GROUND.



THEN ONE DAY—



WHO ARE YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING HERE?

ECHCHAMA NAYAK
HAS SENT US TO TAKE
YOU AND YOUR
FAMILY AWAY FROM
HERE.

WE HAVE DUG A
TUNNEL TO TAKE
YOU OUT.

A TUNNEL?
IT'S A HAZARDOUS
SCHEME!

THE GUARDS HERE
ARE VERY ALERT.
ANYWAY, I'LL WAKE UP
THE QUEEN AND
THE PRINCES.

SRIRANGA, HIS WIFE AND HIS TWO
SONS DESCENDED INTO THE
TUNNEL ONE BY ONE.

OUTSIDE, THE SOLDIERS WERE
PATROLLING THE GROUNDS.



SUDDENLY —



WHAT
HAPPENED?

THE GROUND
SUDDENLY
CAVED IN
UNDER HIM.





IT'S A
TUNNEL!
SOMEBODY
HAS BEEN
DIGGING A
TUNNEL
HERE!

LET'S SEE
WHERE IT
LEADS TO.



AHHA!



THE PRISONERS ARE
TRYING TO ESCAPE...
WE'VE CAUGHT THEM
REDHANDED.

THE ROYAL PRISONERS AND THEIR ERSTWHILE
RESCUERS WERE TAKEN BACK TO THE PALACE.



I TOLD YOU
WE WOULDN'T
SUCCEED.

ONLY ONE MAN WHO WAS FAR AHEAD OF THE OTHERS MANAGED TO ESCAPE.

THEY DISCOVERED
THE TUNNEL!
THEY WILL SOON
BE HERE!

LET'S
GET OUT
OF HERE!

SHAKEN BY THE DARING PLANS OF ECHCHAMA
NAYAK, JAGGARAYA TRANSFERRED THE
PRISONERS TO ANOTHER PRISON IN THE FORT.

THESE WALLS
ARE IMPREGNABLE.

NO ONE CAN DIG
A TUNNEL THROUGH
THIS ROCKY GROUND.

BUT IT DID NOT TAKE THE FAITHFUL
ECHCHAMA LONG TO DISCOVER WHERE
HIS MASTER WAS IMPRISONED.

WE'LL CAPTURE
THAT PLACE.

HOW?

WE'LL NEED
THOUSANDS
OF MEN FOR
THE TASK.

NOT IF WE
DO IT MY WAY.
LISTEN...

ECHCHAMA'S MEN BEGAN TO INFILTRATE THE
FORT IN THE GUISE OF PEASANTS AND
TRADERS.



OBALA NAYAK TOO ENTERED THE FORTRESS...

...AND WENT INTO HIDING LIKE THE REST
OF HIS MEN. THEN ONE EVENING —

JAGGARAYA
IS GOING OUT
TOMORROW...
TO MEET A
CHIEFTAIN.

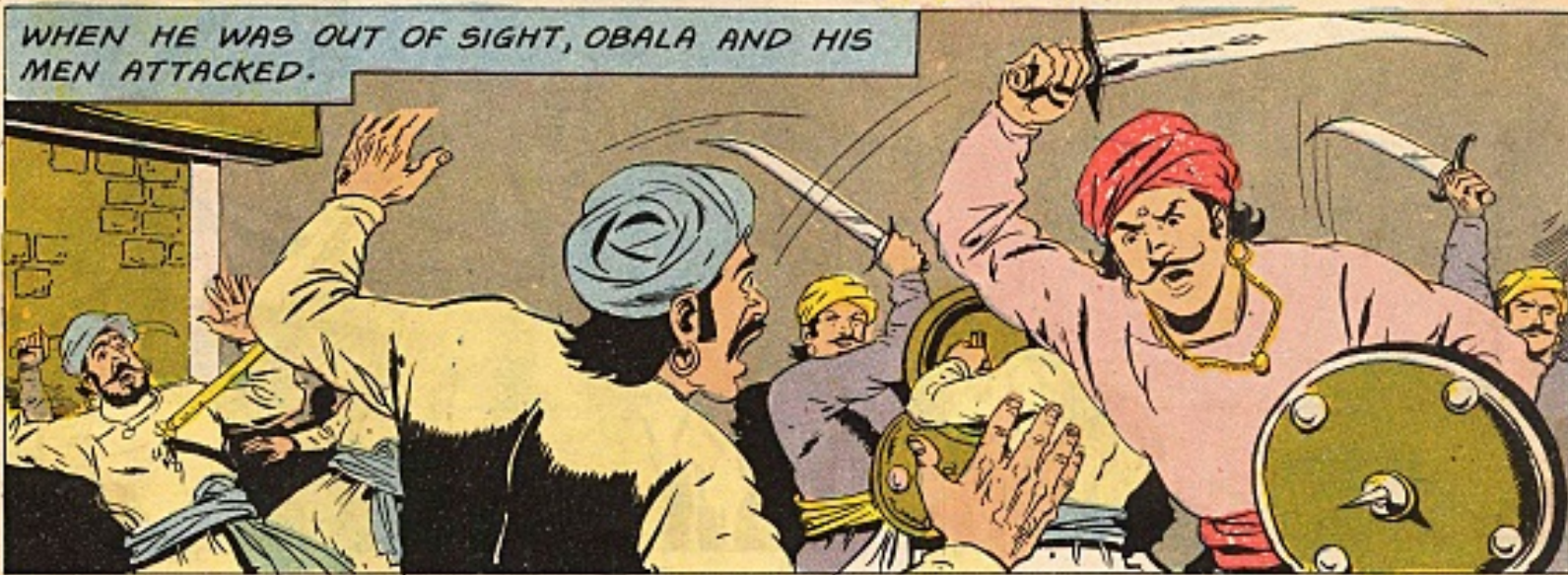
HE'LL BE
TAKING SOME
OF HIS MEN
WITH HIM. IT'S
THE RIGHT TIME
FOR US TO
STRIKE.

PASS THE
WORD AROUND.
LET OUR MEN
BE READY.

THE NEXT MORNING JAGGARAYA LEFT WITH ALMOST HALF OF THE MEN IN THE FORT.



WHEN HE WAS OUT OF SIGHT, OBALA AND HIS MEN ATTACKED.



THE SOLDIERS WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE AND SOON THREE OF THE FOUR GATES OF THE FORT WERE IN OBALA'S POSSESSION.

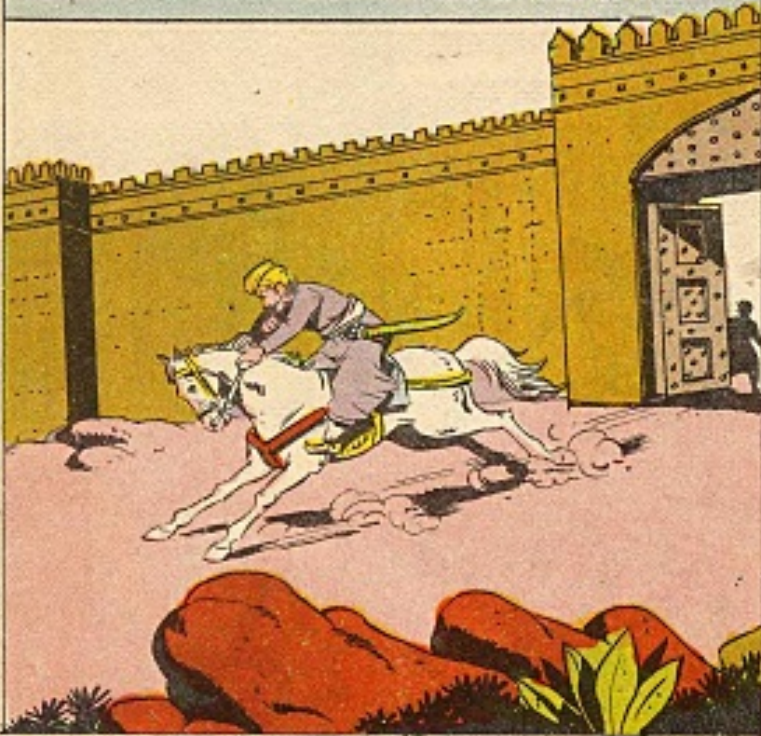


TELL HIM TO COME QUICKLY WITH THE REST OF OUR ARMY!



AS THE MESSENGER RODE AWAY...

...ANOTHER MESSENGER WAS ON HIS WAY TO JAGGARAYA.



ONE OF OUR MEN
FROM THE FORT
IS TRYING TO
CATCH UP WITH
US!

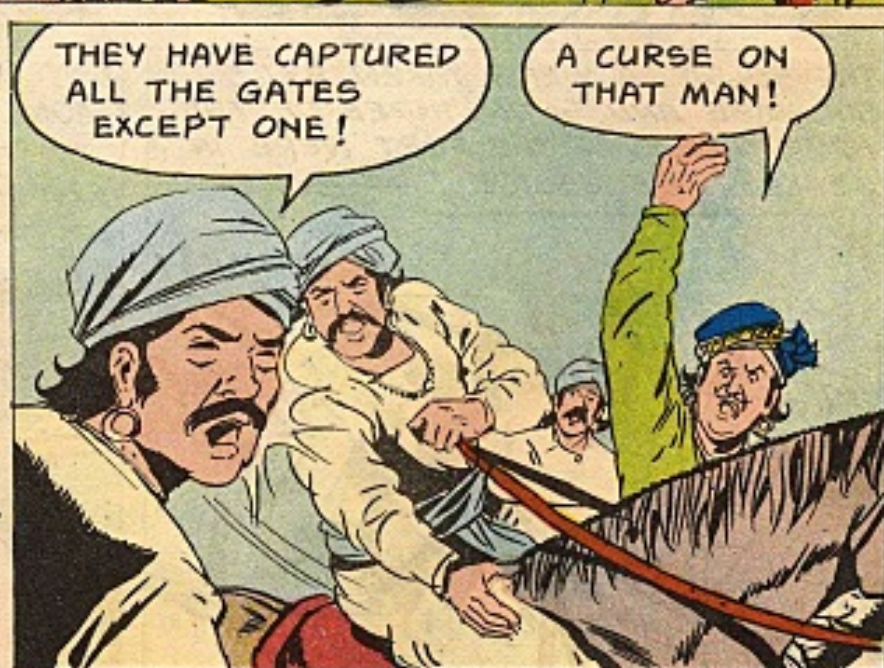


ECHCHAMA'S
MEN ARE IN
THE FORT!



THEY HAVE CAPTURED
ALL THE GATES
EXCEPT ONE!

A CURSE ON
THAT MAN!



BACK TO
THE FORT!



OBALA AND HIS MEN, JUBILANT WITH
THEIR SUCCESS WERE WAITING FOR
ECCHAMA TO COME. WHEN THEY SAW
A CLOUD IN THE DISTANCE —



HERE COMES
ECHCHAMA
NAYAK!

BUT THEY WERE IN
FOR A SURPRISE.



IT'S
JAGGA!



ATTACK!



OBALA AND HIS MEN FOUGHT BRAVELY
BUT THEY WERE OUTNUMBERED AND
SOON ALL OF THEM WERE DEAD.

WHEN ECHCHAMA ARRIVED AT THE FORT ALL THE GATES WERE CLOSED...



...AND HE HAD TO WITHDRAW.



HOWEVER, ECHCHAMA'S BRAVE ATTEMPT HAD SHAKEN JAGGARAYA'S MEN INCLUDING HIS OWN BROTHER.



ECHCHAMA WILL NEVER GIVE UP HIS EFFORTS TO RESCUE SRIRANGA.

ONLY AS LONG AS SRIRANGA IS ALIVE.

YOU MEAN...?



YES. WE'LL PUT HIM OUT OF THE WAY! FOR EVER! AND YOU WILL DO IT.



THAT NIGHT JAGGARAYA'S BROTHER
VISITED THE PRISON.

YOUR ATTEMPT
TO ESCAPE IS
A CRIME.

FIRST YOU LET
YOUR SON ESCAPE
BUT WE LET
THAT PASS.

THEN YOU TRIED
TO ESCAPE WITH
YOUR WHOLE
FAMILY...

I HAVE NO
DEFENCE
TO OFFER.

I AM NOT
AFRAID OF
YOUR
PUNISHMENTS.

IT'S
NOT ONLY
YOURSELF.

YOUR WHOLE
FAMILY STANDS
CONDEMNED.

THEN I HAVE ONLY ONE
REQUEST TO MAKE
OF YOU.

LET MINE BE
THE HAND
THAT PUTS
MY FAMILY
TO SLEEP.



WITH HIS OWN HANDS SRIRANGA TOOK THE LIVES OF HIS WIFE AND HIS TWO SONS AND THEN TURNED THE SWORD ON HIMSELF.

THE NEWS SHOCKED EVERYBODY INCLUDING SEVERAL CHIEFTAINS WHO WERE SUPPORTING JAGGARAYA.



HE SHOULD NOT HAVE DONE THIS.

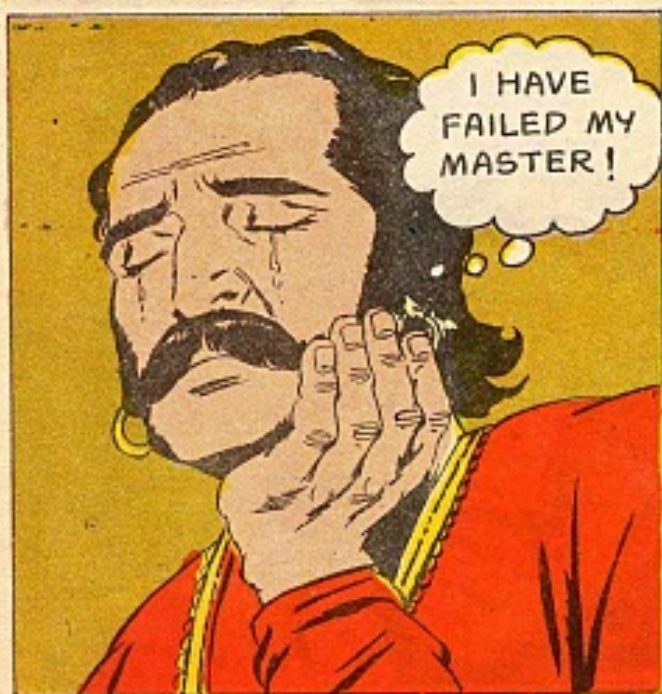


AFTER ALL, SRIRANGA WAS THE APPOINTED KING.

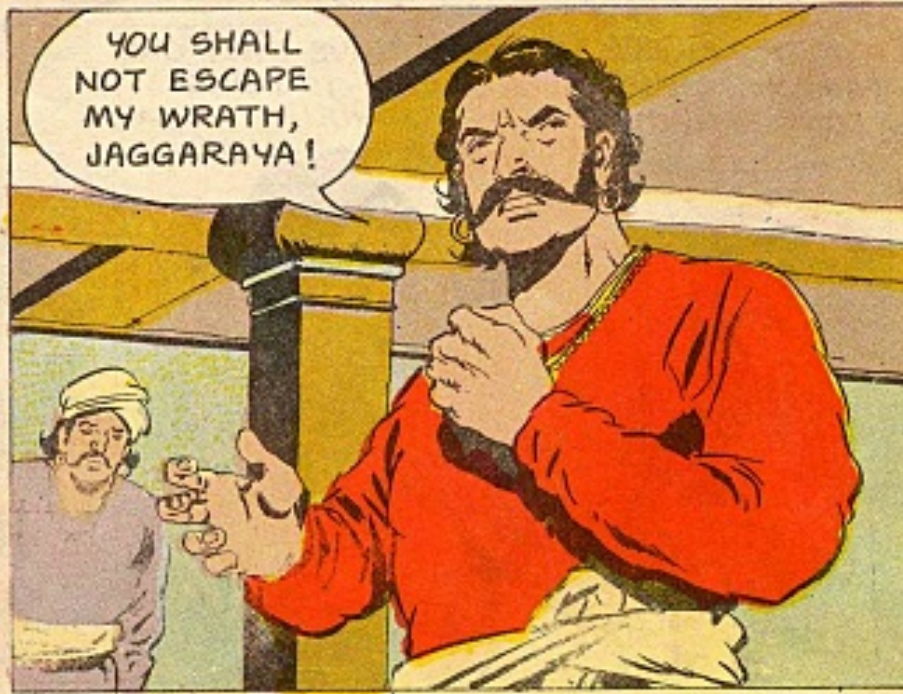
THE MOST AFFECTED WAS ECHCHAMA.



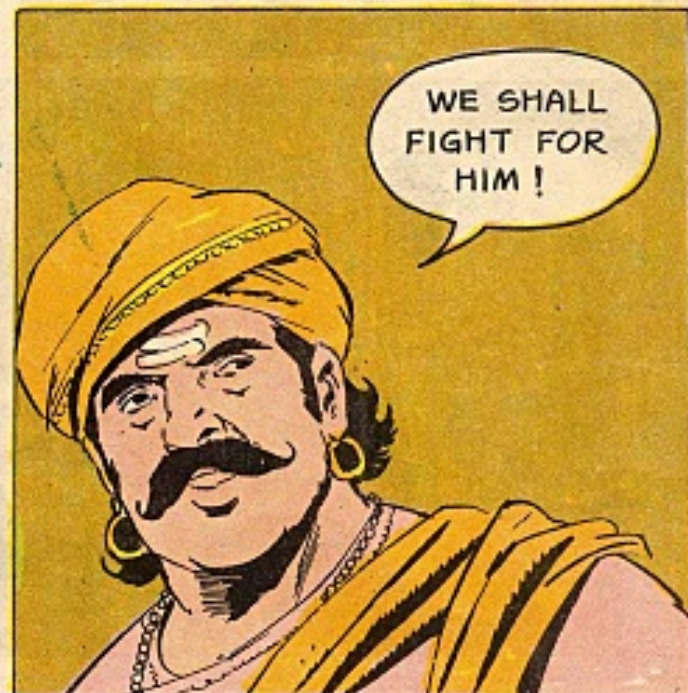
THIS IS THE BLACKEST DAY IN MY LIFE.



I HAVE FAILED MY MASTER!



YOU SHALL NOT ESCAPE MY WRATH, JAGGARAYA!



...ATTACKED THE CAPITAL. IN THE
BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED...



...JAGGARAYA AND HIS NEPHEW WERE DEFEATED. THEY
WERE FORCED TO FLEE.*



ECHCHAMA ENTERED THE CAPITAL AND
INSTALLED SRIRANGA'S TWELVE-
YEAR-OLD SON ON THE THRONE.



THIS MUST BE THE PROUDEST
MOMENT IN ECHCHAMA'S LIFE.
FOR HE HAS MADE GOOD
HIS PLEDGE TO SRIRANGA-
RAYA.

LOYALTY, GREATER
THAN HIS, HAS NEVER
BEEN WITNESSED IN
THIS LAND.

* JAGGARAYA WAS KILLED LATER IN ANOTHER BATTLE WITH ECHCHAMA NAYAK. 30



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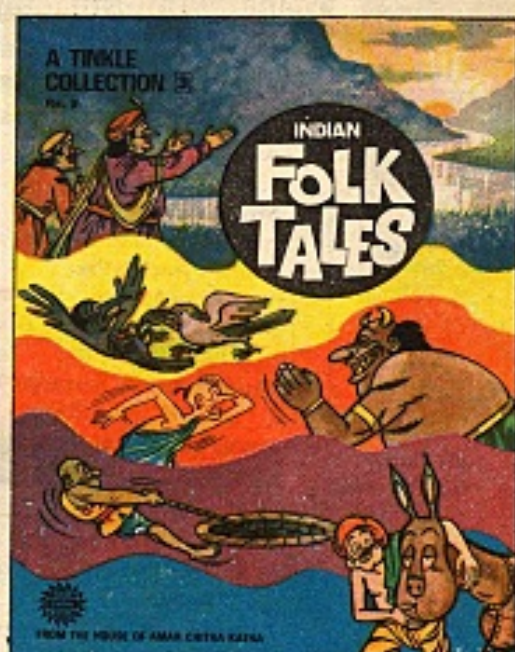
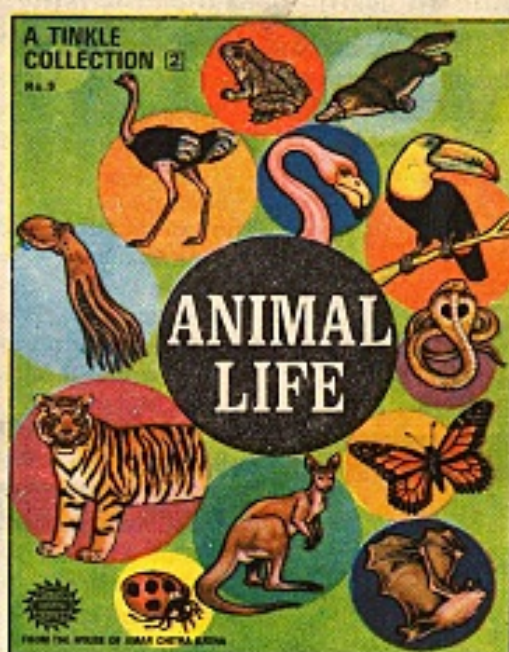
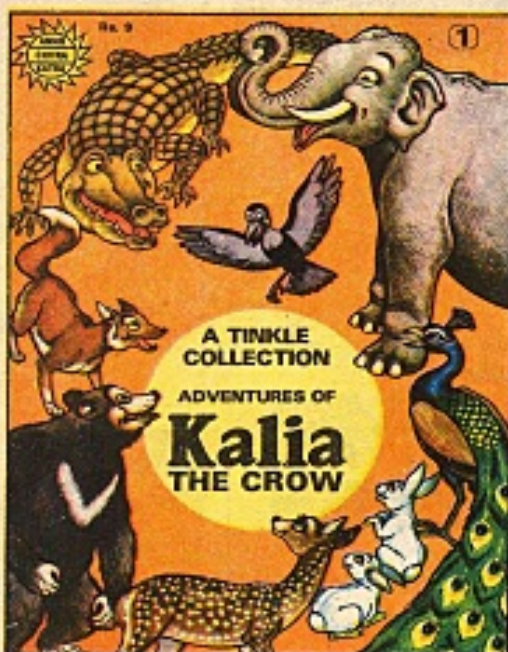
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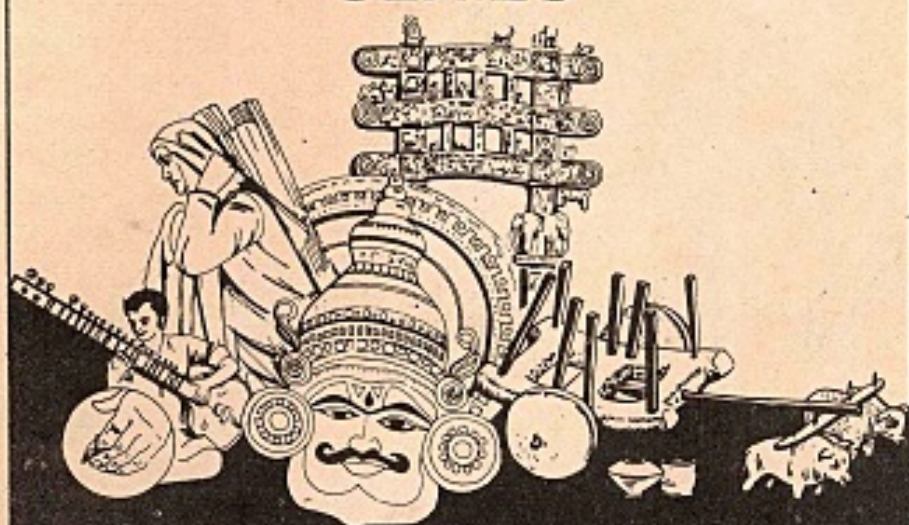
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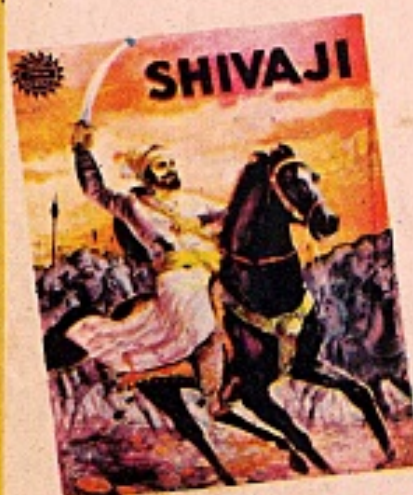
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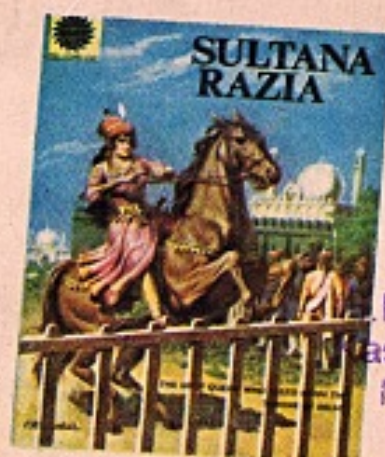
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